

COUNCIL ON HOUSING
Public Session
Buena Vista Conference Center
New Castle, Delaware
March 13, 2013

Motions

- Approval of February 9, 2013 Minutes.

Action Items

- Ms. Louder to email By-Laws items for review to Council.

Important Dates

- April 10, 2013 – next Council meeting.

Ms. Sokolowski, Chair, called to order the public session of the Council on Housing at 2:10 p.m. on March 13, 2013. In addition to Ms. Sokolowski, the following Council members were present:

Pat Batchelor	Ralph Peters
Francis Julian	Vincent White
Connie Louder	Norma Zumsteg
Donna Mitchell	

The following Council members were absent and excused from the meeting:

Hugh Leahy	Corrine Massey
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Also attending:

Lynda Blythe, Administrative Specialist III, Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA)
Susan Eliason, Director of Housing Development
Matthew Heckles, Legislative and Policy Advisor, DSHA

Guest present:

Kyle Hodges, State Council for Persons with Disabilities.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Zumsteg moved, and Mr. Julian seconded, that the Minutes of February 13, 2013 be approved as amended. The motion was unanimously passed.

DSHA REPORT – Mr. Heckles

- Budget hearing -
 - Legislators questions which were answered after the hearing:
 - Q. Age distribution of cost burdened rental households and Delaware in comparison to other states.
 - A. Ages are on the older rather than younger side.
 - Q. Rental rates in Delaware and in comparison to other states.
 - A. Rates vary from county to county and town to town but there appears to be no major rental market problems in Delaware.
- Housing Needs Assessment -
 - Mr. Leahy and Mr. Heckles attended the stakeholder's meeting February 19th to discuss what information will be needed and most useful.
 - The Request For Proposal will be released within the next few weeks.
 - Previous assessments merely collected data; this assessment will include an analysis of the data collected.
- Bayard Plaza –
 - March 14 – DSHA and DEDO will hold the grand opening of this tax credit site.
 - Council members have been invited to attend.
- Sequestration –
 - Still waiting for information from HUD as to when and how cuts will affect DSHA.
 - Expected cut is approximately 5.1%
 - Public Housing Capital Fund - \$30,000
 - Public Housing Operating Fund - \$120,000
 - Section 8 Voucher program - \$390,000
 - CDBG - \$90,000
 - Emergency Shelter Grants and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) - \$20,000
 - HOME program – none
- Manufactured Housing –
 - \$300,000 from the DEMAP program will be used to establish assistance program.
 - Effective date is March 18, 2013. A press event will be held Wednesday, March 27th, at 2:00 p.m. in the community room of Victoria Mews in Wilmington.
 - Goal is to assist 60 or more qualified homeowners.
 - Makes up 12% of homes statewide, 25% of that in Sussex County.
 - Housing counseling agencies will qualify applicants.
 - Primary residences only are eligible.
 - Payment will be made for arrears to either the landlord for lot rent arrears or home loan lender for arrears.
 - Does not include funds for rental rate increases unless applicant is qualified.
 - Cap is \$5,000 for 12 months.

Ms. Sokolowski thanked Mr. Peters for attending the February 27th Bond Bill hearing.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HOUSING POLICY – Mr. Peters

Referring to the Fair Housing documents Council received (copies attached), Mr. Peters reported that the committee met to discuss the Council's role in advocating income discrimination legislation. The committee will review the actual legislation, when presented, with the hope of recommending advocacy of it to Council at that time.

Also discussed, per the current Strategic Objectives, was what type of advocacy should Council take on various items. The audience, medium, DSHA's stance, and the Delaware Administration's stance on upcoming legislation should be reviewed prior to any advocacy by Council.

Mr. Peters introduced Mr. Hodges who will spearhead the advocacy of income discrimination legislation for the state.

Source of Income Presentation – Mr. Hodges

The duties of the State Council for Persons with Disabilities, as mandated by state Code, are to propose and promote regulations, legislations and policies which impact and try to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Proposed legislation is being drafted concerning income discrimination legislation to reduce fair housing barriers to affordable and accessible housing. A copy of the draft legislation, prepared in 2006, was given to Council (copy attached). Council is on record, as stated in their 2012 Annual Report, that it endorses the concept of this proposed legislation. Mr. Hodges attendance at the meeting was to answer any questions and/or concerns the Council might have about supporting such legislation and asked for future comments or suggestions.

Mr. Hodges suggested that Council could send a letter of endorsement, attend housing committee meetings, and testify when appropriate to demonstrate its support of the legislation.

Mr. Heckles stated the term "commercially reasonable" was included in the draft to ensure landlord's could verify an applicant's ability to afford the rent and not default on it. Mr. Hodges will research definitions of "commercially reasonable" and "income" as used by other jurisdictions. Council requested government assistance be included in future draft legislation. Mr. White will provide HUD information regarding nondiscrimination to Mr. Heckles. Mr. Peters will be in direct contact with Mr. Hodges during the creation of the legislation. The final draft will be provided to Council prior to submission to the Legislature.

OPERATIONS – Ms. Louder

The recent member survey indicated members would like refresher presentations regarding DSHA's various programs and introduced Ms. Eliason who provided information on the Housing Management section of DSHA.

DSHA Housing Management Section Presentation – Ms. Eliason

Ms. Eliason presented a review of the DSHA Housing Management Section (copy attached). DSHA, Ms. Eliason noted, is unique in that it is both a public housing authority, made possible by this section, and a public finance agency.

Areas reviewed were:

- Current staffing.
- The public housing/Section 8 waiting list.
- Public Housing sites.
- Project-based assistance (Section 8) - is given to the project rather than the resident.
- Housing Choice Voucher assistance - is given to the resident and is portable.
- Family Unification Program.
- State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP).
- Program Funding.
- Moving to Work (MTW) Program.
 - Program enhancements
 - DSHA strike policy
 - Tiers to Success
 - Working to break the cycle of poverty
 - Resident services
 - Employment requirements
 - Building through education
 - Savings accounts and disbursements
 - Homeownership
 - Success

Council will include information from the MTW annual report and plan, which are sent to HUD, in its 2013 Annual Report.

Ms. Louder resumed her report stating it was the committee's charge to revamp the Council By-Laws. Council unanimously approved that the committee begin drafting needed changes. A draft will be presented at the May 8, 2013 meeting for Council's review. The draft will then be sent to the proper legal department for review and returned to Council with comments. A new draft will be prepared for presentation and adoption at the next regularly scheduled meeting. Ms. Louder will email a list of items for consideration for the draft to all Council members and asked for their responses by March 28, 2013.

COMMUNICATIONS – Ms. Batchelor

Ms. Batchelor and Mr. Heckles will meet to begin drafting the Council's 2013 Annual Report.

OTHER BUSINESS OLD/NEW – none.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on April 10, 2013, at 2:00 p.m. in the Community Building at Huling Cove, 1140 Savannah Road, Lewes, DE.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion made by Ms. Batchelor, and seconded by Mr. Peters, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lynda T. Blythe".

Lynda T. Blythe

Note: Copies of materials referenced as “attached” in these Minutes are available upon request.